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**EMERGENCY SERVICES**

*Creating Solutions for Our Future*

March 4, 2010

BY ELECTRONIC FILING

Marlene H. Dortch, Secretary  
Federal Communications Commission  
Office of the Secretary  
445 12th Street SW  
Washington, DC 20554

RE: Blanket Waiver to Permit Hospitals to Use Amateur Radio as Part of Emergency Preparedness Drills  
WP Docket No. 10-54

As an emergency manager of Thurston County in Washington State, I am requesting the FCC grant the American Hospital Association's (AHA) request for a blanket waiver of the Commission's rules to permit hospitals to use amateur radio operators who are hospital employees to transmit communications on behalf of the hospital as part of emergency preparedness drills.

These drills are a critical preparedness measure enabling hospitals and communities to be practiced and ready to communicate well in an actual disaster event. The information that hospitals and local emergency management agencies exchange can be life-saving and critical to the overall successful response and recovery of the community. To demand a waiver request for each drill is a burdensome requirement for hospitals exercising their emergency plans as mandated by the accreditation association and requested by the government.

I whole-heartedly agree with AHA's statement that waiver relief should be available for hospital exercises because it is in the public interest to ensure that hospital communications operate effectively during emergencies. Please grant the AHA's request without conditions requiring hospitals provide notice to the Commission of their drills and exercises. I believe the usefulness of that information to the Commission is low compared to the burden of hospitals of being required to report it.

If you have questions about this opinion and request, please contact me at (360) 754-3360. Thank you for accepting comments on this issue.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Estes  
Emergency Management Manager